

# THE MCGILL DAILY

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Ishe komborera Africa since 1911

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## Southern Africa

Special Issue



**D**epending on what map you look at, the region of Southern Africa consists of 8 countries; Angola, Namibia, Botswana, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique, and Malawi (sometimes added to this list are Zaire and Tanzania). However, most peoples' knowledge of the region does not go beyond the political developments in South Africa.

Beyond the fact that these countries share much of the same geographical land space, similar peoples, and similar cultures, there is something that intricately binds these countries together.

Like all African countries, they share a colonial history and they are all, to a large extent, still burdened with the legacy of this colonial history.

Faced with charges of discrimination against white landowners

for his governments land reform policy, which is aimed at redistributing land stolen during the colonial era, Robert Mugabe, president of Zimbabwe, was forced to tell the Canada's Conservative government to stay out of Zimbabwe's affairs. He told them to look towards their own backyard, towards their treatment of indigenous peoples, to find real discrimination.

In South Africa, despite the

1990 release of Nelson Mandela and the elections scheduled for April 1994, violence still plagues much of South Africa. In fact since Mandela's release the violence has escalated in anticipation of elections.

The recent assassination of Christopher Hani, leader of South Africa's Communist Party, has

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served to strengthen the belief of many young black South Africans that white South Africans are not ready for a "non-racial" south Africa.

In fact, calls for calm by Nelson Mandela after Hani's assassination in a packed stadium were widely rejected.

Cosatu (Congress of South African Trade Unions) has put its full support behind the African National Congress as the only reasonable choice in the upcoming elections in South Africa.

However, they have cautioned that it is in the interest of working people in South Africa that after the elections, Cosatu and the ANC remain separate and distinct, in order to protect the interest the interest of South Africa's working people.

Other parts of Southern Africa, notably, Angola, laced with a legacy of colonialism and all its ramifications, are still struggling for true freedom within their borders.

This issue represents only a small sample of the social, cultural, and political issues that confront the region. Hopefully it will shed some light on the region as a whole, as, given the negligible Western media coverage of the area, very few such opportunities are generally provided.

by David Austin

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## Indians in South Africa



Mahatma Gandhi and the Mountbattens in India

its non-European peoples "...in conformity with the principles of the United Nations Charter."

It was signed by A.B. Xuma, then president of the African National Congress, Yosouf Dadoo of the Transvaal Indian Congress, and P. Naicker of the Natal Indian Congress.

In attempts to separate communities and divide the ANC from its

union with Indian led trade-unions and its other members, the South African government extended its status of "Honorary whites" to Asians, both Chinese and Indians. Fortunately, it was, for the most part, rejected.

While certain elements within the Indian community wanted to accept the South African government proposal, there has been little outright collaboration. However, the fact that Asians accepted their legal status as being above that of Africans and were complacent regarding the 'divide and conquer' strategy of the South African government, has been enough to severely hurt unified opposition to apartheid.

Ghandi's attempts to eliminate the Passbook Laws offers one of the best examples of Indian resistance and collaboration in South Africa. He organized the Indian community and encouraged them to burn their Passbooks in passive resistance to the government.

Yet Ghandi's view of South Africa was somewhat disturbing and problematic. He worked for the elimination of barriers of race and class yet, he did not see Africans as part of his movement. In essence he hoped for a

Indians... possess advantages and privileges over Africans, yet they in no way have the same advantages as white South Africans.

Indian resistance to colonialism and later to apartheid began almost as soon as Indians came to South Africa. They have petitioned for better wages and living conditions and been instrumental in the establishing of trade unions and guilds. However, there has not been consistent resistance in solidarity with Africans.

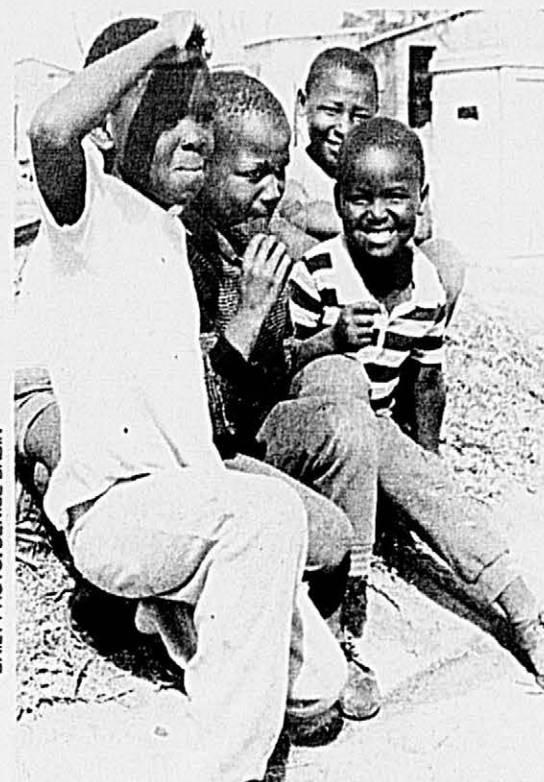
The 1947 Xuma-Naicker-Dadoo pact was signed to bridge the gap between Asians and Africans. This was, in essence, a pledge of, "... the fullest co-operation between the Africans and Indian peoples..."

The signing was also an attempt to dismantle apartheid and bring South Africa to treat

sort of Indian Renaissance.

Ghandi set-up Ashrams and wanted Indians to live communally, governed by Panchayats (elected village councils). It is clear from his prison writings how he felt about Africans. "The chief reason that I got nervous was that there were a number of wild, murderous-looking, vicious Bantu and Chinese prisoners."

Indians in South Africa will undoubtedly play a significant role in its future. However, they must define a new position for themselves and build on the solidarity they have achieved, rather than trying to raise their status by picking up what whites left behind.



DAILY PHOTO: DENISE BABIN

BY DENISE BABIN

**UGANDA VILLAGE, SOUTH AFRICA (CUP)** — In racist South Africa, children must use their christian names.

Apartheid laws may be history, but these children must fight the education that has taught them they are inferior to white people. They fear the powerful white elite and its control over their lives.

"It's hard for the children," said a woman walking in this makeshift community of mud houses, sheet metal shacks and shattered glass on an early August morning. "They see and feel so much racist violence at such a young age."

The children of Uganda village in Natal province, like most black children in South Africa, are the hardest hit by the racist regime. Confused and scared, they don't always run fast enough when the government-funded Inkatha warriors come to slaughter and destroy.

One seven year old boy proudly lifted his Coca-Cola T-shirt to show off a machete scar over half of his little belly. When he was a toddler, his home was burned to the ground and his family chased out of the Umlazi township by armed Inkatha supporters.

They settled, like six hundred others, here in the hillside refugee camp called Uganda, overlooking their destroyed neighborhood. The community has been here for nine years.

"Why aren't you in school today?" I asked. He could barely contain the contemptuous laughter inside his blushing red cheeks, as he gave his excuse through an interpreter: his shoes needed repair. But then, most of the kids go barefoot anyway.

School in Uganda is a 20 by 15 foot wood and tin shack with a dirt floor and four cracked windows. On any given day, as many as 80

## The lessons of apartheid

### South Africa's children

It takes a lot of courage to go to school. Any place where more than ten people gather can become a target of Inkatha violence... The day before I visited, Inkatha stormed the settlement. No one was killed, but a few houses were wrecked and the children terrorized.

students from grades three to eleven cram into the stuffy, damp, community-run school. The younger ones learn addition outside on chalkboards made of plywood painted black or green.

A rainy day can sometimes shut the leaking school down.

It takes a lot of courage to go to school. Any place where more than ten people gather can become a target of Inkatha violence and make the headlines in Canadian daily newspapers. The day before I visited, Inkatha stormed the settlement. No one was killed, but a few houses were wrecked and the children terrorized.

Local teachers without formal training run the school on a volunteer basis. Olivia, the school principal, said what little money they receive from the Methodist Church of Southern Africa pays for a daily lunch for the children. There's usually bread. On a good day, hot beef soup.

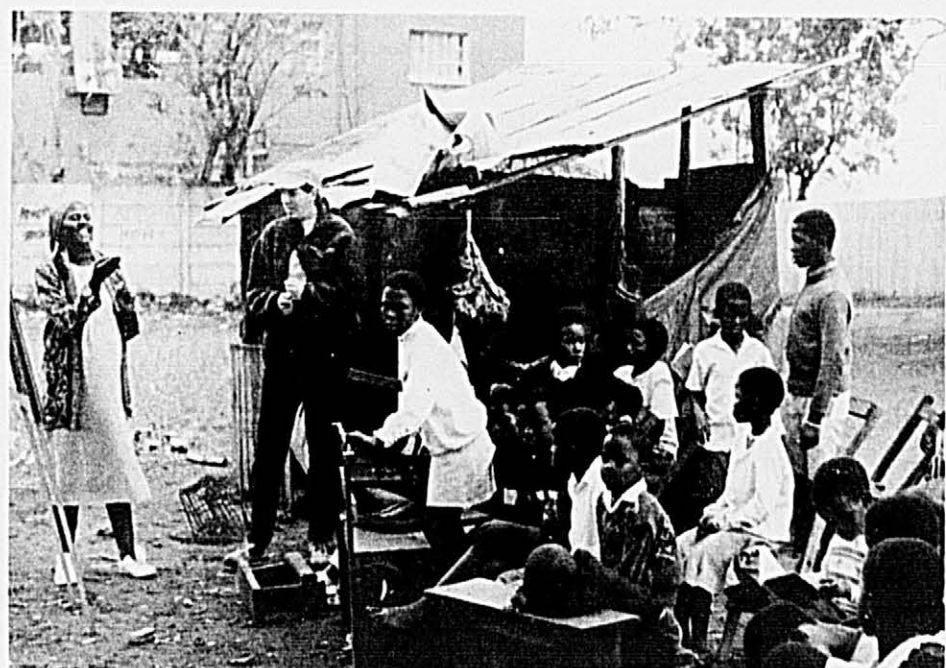
Uganda school is not recognized by the Department of Education and Training. Notebooks are re-used and children share pencils.

There are close to 250 children registered at Uganda School. The Atlanta, Georgia branch of the Africa National Congress in the United States shipped school supplies to the settlement in mid-September.

The people of Uganda have organized tight security around their community. The men keep a 24-hour vigil in a shelter on top of the hill. They take turns patrolling the area in pairs, always on the lookout for any sign of Inkatha. There only weapons are rocks and hand-made spears.

"We must keep watch, day and night, this is a war and we must defend our people," said a grade five and six teacher. Pointing to the police station only one kilometer away, he frowns in anger.

"The last time (Inkatha) attacked, the police waited two hours before coming. Then it was too late. Houses were burning, people were hurting, and Inkatha was gone."



Schoolchildren in Uganda, South Africa



# Pamberi neVakadzi!

*Women in southern Africa take a stand.*



SWAPO demonstration

BY RUMBIDZAI KATEDZA

Last March, Lesotho had its first female presidential candidate ever in its first democratic election in 23 years. The candidacy of Limakatso Ntakatsane of the Koponang Basotho Party represented a major step for women in the region.

The fact that she did not win, however, implies how unwilling the political structures of southern Africa are to accept women in positions of power.

Women have always been at the forefront of anti-racist and anti-colonialist movements in southern Africa, yet they are still discriminated against.

Tired of being treated as second-class citizens on their own homelands, women are now fighting gender battles to overturn patrilineal laws and engrained sexism.

In southern Africa, the revolution is just beginning though the struggle has always existed. A new culture of women is emerging in the cities of the region. They are women who have moved to urban centres, women who are getting educated, women who are delaying marriage in order to pursue careers, and women who are seeking love as opposed to family convenience when they get married.

These women are strongly opposed to the assumed rights of husbands to beat their wives and "keep" several girlfriends. These women do not conform to the model of the traditional woman as constructed by southern African men.

As a consequence of this, male opposition is rife, because a liberated woman could mean no more lazy days on the couch for many an African man.

In many traditional southern African societies, a woman is not free to map her own future. Before marriage her life was led by her father. Once married, the woman did not become independent, because she then had to respect and obey her husband.

Furthermore, traditional inheritance laws in southern Africa leave widows in a very bad position. When her husband dies, everything she has built with him can be taken away by his family, even

the children.

However, women in southern Africa can now fight back in courts of law and win. Customary laws made sense in their historical context, but today many people see that tradition can be adapted to fit a changing world.

## Fighting the Government in Botswana

Unity Dow, a woman from Botswana who married an American man, wanted her children to take her citizenship. The nation's patrilineal citizenship law, she contended, violated her constitutional rights. The courts agreed.

This was a great victory for women in Botswana, but the joy was short-lived. It has already been a year since the ruling and the government has not amended that law.

In the midst of this, politicians are saying that a referendum may be held to entrench sexual discrimination in the constitution! Even the attorney-general argued that the country's forefathers intended a bias against women. He also maintained that the legal system is rightfully designed to preserve male dominance.

Fortunately, the Court of Appeals quashed the attorney-general's arguments, saying that sexual discrimination is unconstitutional.

The lack of education of people in rural areas has continuously been used as a tool to maintain sexual oppression. Many women do not realize that they can vote and that they can take the government, as well as their husbands, to court.

Lesotho's female presidential candidate indicated how some views are changing, even to the extent of influencing other parties policies.

When the Basotholand Congress Party (BCP) was elected into office earlier on this year, they promised to end all forms of discrimination. Women were to attain legal equality but, on the other hand, the BCP reforms would do nothing to alter questionable traditions.

Legal reform is an important factor in improving women's lives. Women in Law in Southern Africa is an organization helping to improve the legal status

of women in the region. As well as educating women on their rights, it supplies data for governments to consider in legal reforms.

## Milestone for Women in Namibia

When Namibia gained its independence from South Africa in 1989 the new government adopted a constitution prohibiting sexual discrimination and allowing affirmative action. Unfortunately, to this day this achievement is still only on paper.

It is like a stab in the back for women. They served as the backbone to the wars of liberation in the region and are still doing so in South Africa. And today they serve as the backbone of southern African economies, working thanklessly in the fields, in the home, and in the workplace to support their nations.

In the Namibian National Assembly, five out of 72 seats are held by women. The numbers are minimal, but they are a start. Women want better representation in government and they want to reap the possible harvests of a post-colonial era.

Zambia also has women in top government positions. There are three in cabinet, but their influence is limited. The constitution states that discrimination against women is permissible under customary law.

Such groups as the YWCA and the National Women's Lobby have taken on a campaign against rape, battery and abuse. Statistics released by the YWCA showed that four out of every ten women in Zambia are physically beaten and in every ten women, four are mentally abused by their partners.

Many men contend that African custom permits spouse abuse. This view stems from the notion of bride price and the commercialization of this tradition. Bride price used to be a token fee paid to the parents of the bride to thank them for bringing up their daughter. Today, bride price can range from anywhere between \$1 000 and \$30 000.

Consequently, many people insist that this practice allows for violence against "purchased" women.

However, this is a misinterpretation of customary laws. Tradition does not allow men to beat their wives. In pre-capitalist times, if a man mistreated his wife, his whole clan was looked down upon and ostracized.

## Zimbabwe's Women's Action Group

There are several women's organizations mushrooming up around southern Africa. There are currently over 70 in the region. One such group is the Harare-based Women's Action Group (WAG).

Amongst other things, WAG pushes for changes in attitudes of court officials who delay the procedure for settling maintenance fees for divorced women. Many women are left penniless after divorce because they have neither education nor skills.

Several self-help programmes for women in these situations have been created by WAG. Women are encouraged to get an education and learn a trade.

WAG has also devised programmes "to educate both men and women on the differences between customary and civil marriages," and "to clarify the customary law on inheritance to strengthen the rights of widows."

The WAG awareness campaign has started to penetrate rural areas, where 82 percent of the country's 5 million women live. Fear is the greatest obstacle that has to be overcome for women to progress in southern Africa. Many women are afraid of defying their husbands or of violating their own culture. But once fear is overcome, women emerge stronger. In Mozambique, for example, more women than ever are applying to law courts for spousal benefits.

## Changes in South Africa

The 1992 United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and five other U.N. conventions concerning women, were signed after continuous lobbying by the Women's Bureau of South Africa. Currently, the Women's National Coalition is soliciting thousands of women of different races for input on South Africa's first women's rights charter.

Within the African National Congress, women have been demanding more of a say in the current negotiations, as well as within the party. In the talks going on in South Africa's World Trade Centre, it is now compulsory for each of the 26 delegations to have at least one woman participating.

Women, who comprise the majority in South Africa, are working to ensure that gender imbalances and racial injustices are redressed simultaneously. If they do not guarantee their inclusion in the current reforms, they will later have to engage in new battles against former allies, just as their sisters are doing in the rest of the region.

They know that supporting racial liberation alone is never enough.



More than two thirds of seasonal workforce are women.



# A fall from grace? *The case of Winnie Mandela*

BY MARIAM KABA

In September 1990, Winnie Mandela was convicted on charges of kidnapping and assault. She was sentenced to six years in prison. It was a fall from grace for a woman who has come to symbolize strength and dignity in the face of incredible adversity. For almost 28 years, Winnie Mandela tirelessly and steadfastly campaigned for her husband's release bringing the media's attention to the injustice of apartheid.

Hers was a difficult task. She was constantly monitored by the "security" forces, but still continued her activities. As chairperson of the ANC's Women's League Committee, she drew attention to the plight of South African women and children. Without her voice, the women of South Africa would be less than invisible.

She was hailed as a national hero, the "mother of the nation", both inside and outside South Africa. While her husband languished in jail, she chose to stay in South Africa, determined to live and thrive in spite of the system.

In this way, she issued a direct challenge and the strongest resistance to the South African state. She would live in her homeland and not allow the powers that be to crush her spirit.

After Nelson Mandela's release from prison, it seemed as though nothing could go wrong for Winnie. She took her place beside her husband and the

"royal couple" walked off together, seemingly destined to live happily ever after.

Soon after, the world watched in astonishment and disbelief as Winnie was charged with kidnapping and assault with intent to do bodily harm. She was accused of having beaten four young men so they would confess to abuse at the hands of a white Methodist minister.

Public opinion, once favourable, was quick to turn against her. The national heroine became a national joke. Nelson Mandela announced he believed his wife was innocent.

Later, he informed the country that he and Winnie would separate. Mandela said, "the love was gone". The media was quick to jump on the bandwagon. Reports of Winnie being a "dragon lady", "selfish" and a "drunk" saturated the airwaves and newspapers. Under the pressure of so much negative press, Winnie resigned from all of her executive positions.

In May 1992, the ANC Women's League staged a protest demanding that Winnie be reinstated as their chairwoman. In response to this, the ANC decided to reprimand the Women's League and suspended the Regional Committee. Once again, women's voices were silenced.

In early July 1993, a court of appeal overturned Winnie's six year jail term and reduced her sentence to a fine. No sooner had the dust settled than did



the ANC leadership rush to welcome her back into the fold.

It seemed it was now politically expedient to associate themselves with her. They appointed her ANC chairperson of the Southern Transvaal (one of the richest and most populated areas in South Africa). It was a peace offering - a way to make amends for leaving her high and dry during the trials and sentencing.

Less than one week later, new charges of kidnapping surfaced against Winnie. The prosecutor is now "look-

ing into the allegations." The government's capacity to fabricate charges and silence people who are seen as threats to the status quo should not be ignored.

It seems as though there is a concerted effort to discredit her. Hopefully this time, the ANC will demonstrate more loyalty and perseverance in dealing with these new charges. After her countless years of commitment to the struggle, this is the least that Winnie Mandela deserves.

## This is our land *Zimbabwe's history of land injustice*

BY TAFADZWA KASAMBIRA

The history of Zimbabwe prior to its independence in 1980 is one of land seizure, forced resettlement, and quashed uprisings. This emanated mostly from the explosive anger at the loss of native land and cattle, ending in tribal dispersal and often death.

The war of Chimurenga, which literally means "struggle" or "resistance", resulted in the freedom of the native peoples of Zimbabwe. Independence gave back to Zimbabweans the right to live as first class citizens in their own country.

The problem for the majority of the people today, however, is where to live. Despite the declaration of a national policy of reconciliation after independence in 1980, racial discrimination is still rife in Zimbabwe. Agriculture is one of the highest foreign exchange earners in Zimbabwe, and most of the farms generating these profits are owned and managed by non-indigenous Zimbabweans.

### European Settlers

The first European settlers entered the country they later called Rhodesia in the early 1890s.

In a matter of five years, some fifteen million of the country's 96 million acres of land had been stolen from the native peoples. The indigenous peoples rebelled against the settlers prompting them to take protective measures against the constant threat of attack.

They put the native Zimbabweans on reserves in an attempt to pacify, control, and separate them.

In order to prevent tribes from uniting in an uprising, each of the reserves was therefore located far from the others in remote, waterless, tsetse fly-infested areas of the country.

Meanwhile, the settlers occupied large tracts of arable land, most of which was developed into the vast commercial farms still present in Zimbabwe today.

Many Zimbabweans live on the virtually barren, mostly dry, rocky land which once served as reserves. These people have no land of their own. All of the arable land is confined to commercial farms which are largely owned by white farmers, part of Zimbabwe's 250,000 whites in a total population of ten million.

### Towards redistribution

In 1979, the Lancaster House Agreement, signed in Lusaka, Zambia was aimed at adjusting this inequitable distribution of land. It was agreed that the Zimbabwean government could only acquire land if both the buyer (the Zimbabwean government) and seller (European farmers) found the terms of the transaction acceptable.

The constitution was to run until 1990, after which time the section dealing with land acquisition could be amended.

This was changed in the Land Acquisition Act in March 1992, which allows the Zimbabwe government to take land

at a level of compensation determined by the government itself. The terms of the act are coming into effect and this is ruffling many feathers.

Over the last few months the *Gazette* has been monitoring the situation in Zimbabwe, and has implied that relations between Canada and Zimbabwe are, at present, less than amiable. The *Gazette* alleged that friction arose when Canada postponed a trade mission meeting between Zimbabwean representatives and potential Canadian investors.

Concern has been expressed about the way Zimbabwe's Land Acquisition is being implemented.

The Canadian government fears that the act may apply to other property as well, thus discouraging investment in Zimbabwe. The Canadian government also argues that the act is unfair because farmers have no right to appeal through the law courts in disputes over compensation. Many farmers who have had their land designated have spent large sums of money hiring foreign lawyers to plead their cases for them in Zimbabwean courts.

President Robert Mugabe's reply to these arguments was vehement. During a public speech last August, he made it perfectly clear that the land issue was a domestic one which was to be resolved by Zimbabweans. He reportedly suggested that no foreign country has any right to interfere in the process of designation or redistribution. Mugabe, has repeatedly stated that only farmland (largely that which

is underutilized) will be designated.

The *Gazette* also reported Mugabe to have said that when the land was first seized from native peoples, there was neither compensation nor settlement through law courts. The newspaper has stated that, at present, Zimbabwe officials are refusing to meet with or speak to Canadian officials.

It has been suggested, several times, that if the farms are taken and redistributed to natives, the land will be wasted in a matter of years due to mismanagement and lack of farming knowledge.

Though typical, this conclusion is untrue. Firstly, no government would take profitable land and abandon the people on it without helping them to keep up its former productivity and monitoring their progress.

Secondly, Zimbabweans are neither languid nor ignorant. Commercial farming was not invented by the European settlers. If the native people are given the resources, there is a very good chance that they will succeed.

The *Gazette* reported recently that President Mugabe is going all out on this issue in order to boost his "flagging popularity" among the Zimbabwean people. True or not, the issue of land is finally being addressed, as was agreed, by both concerned parties, thirteen years ago.

As long as designation is logical and free of abuse, the process should continue on course. Redistribution of Zimbabwe's land to the native people is long overdue.



# Namibia: past, present and future

BY GWEYN SCHULMAN

Three years ago the world took notice as Namibians emerged victorious after decades of struggle against German, then South African colonialism. In March 1990, SWAPO, the liberation movement, became the government, and soon after the world's attention shifted elsewhere. But the sparsely populated southern African country remains an arena of struggle as Namibians confront the legacy of a profoundly destructive apartheid system, and an economy that continues to serve external interests first and foremost.

## The historical context

Over three decades of genocidal German rule in Namibia (including the 1903-07 extermination campaign against the Hereros and Namas, Namibian ethnic groups) came to an end following Germany's defeat in the First World War.

The League of Nations mandated the territory to South Africa in 1920 to "promote to the utmost the material and moral well-being and social progress of the inhabitants of the territory".

To the contrary, South Africa pursued a policy of annexation and appalling exploitation in Namibia.

In 1960, the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) was formed to channel Namibians' resistance to South Africa's oppressive rule into an effective liberation struggle. Six years later SWAPO launched an armed struggle against the apartheid regime.

SWAPO's tireless lobbying to wake up the international community to the crimes being perpetrated by South Africa led the United Nations, in 1971, to declare South Africa's occupation of Namibia illegal. Two years later it recognized SWAPO as the sole legitimate representative of the Namibian people. South Africa defied the UN's resolutions, and intensified its vicious counter-insurgency campaign against SWAPO.

South Africa reproduced its apartheid system in Namibia, implementing racist social and economic policies. Knowing that it was living on borrowed time, South Africa accelerated its pillage of Namibia's natural resources. International economic interests, both West to East, interpreted South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia as an invitation to plunder those resources not fully controlled by South Africa, most notably its once rich fish stocks.

The liberation movement's efforts, combined with regional developments (including the defeat of South Africa's military strategy in Angola) led to a UN-sponsored peace agreement and elections in 1989. SWAPO's success at the polls proved to be a bitter-sweet victory for most Namibians. A flawed electoral process, and the political constraints resulting from a foreign controlled economy, left SWAPO with extremely limited margin to carry through its revolution.

South African control of the electoral process and its abundance of resources permitted it to conduct an aggressive



SWAPO supporters inside Manibia

propaganda campaign, harassing and intimidating voters and candidates. In addition, deficiencies in the UN's supervision of the election period led to a number of serious violations including, most tragically, the massacre of 300-400 SWAPO guerillas and their supporters by South African security forces as they attempted to cross the border into Namibia in search of UN demobilization points.

## Unholy alliance

These factors translated into the loss of a decisive number of votes for SWAPO and it failed to attain the two-thirds majority required to implement constitutional changes in keeping with the aims of the liberation struggle.

Instead SWAPO found itself forced to negotiate a new constitution with the South African-inspired, white-dominated Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA). This unholy alliance has hampered serious consideration of land reform, affirmative action and other meas-

Economic neo-colonialism — another legacy of apartheid rule — has also severely limited the SWAPO government's options for realizing true Namibian liberation. Following elections, SWAPO's stated allegiance to the "moral superiority of socialism" rapidly crumbled to be replaced by the "mixed economy" (read capitalist) option.

This about face in economic policy is not surprising. When South Africa finally ended its occupation of Namibia, it left behind a country seriously in debt, an economy almost entirely controlled by powerful South African and other foreign corporations, and a system geared towards the extraction and export of raw materials.

Typical of a colonial economy, it was structured to funnel Namibian wealth to South Africa. Under colonial rule, Namibia bought 90% of its imports from, and sold 70-80% of its exports to South Africa. Independent Namibia was born with these economic structures intact.

This constitutionally enshrined protection, what in reality is white male privilege, has burdened Namibia with one of the most expensive civil services in Sub-Saharan Africa.

ures aimed at attacking the core of decades of apartheid misrule.

One of the most paralyzing results of the DTA's participation in drawing up the new constitution has been the now notorious article 141, which states that "...any person holding office under any law in force on the date of Independence shall continue to hold such office unless or until he or she resigns or is retired, transferred or removed from office in accordance with the law".

This constitutionally enshrined protection, what in reality is white male privilege, has burdened Namibia with one of the most expensive civil services in Sub-Saharan Africa, a civil service dominated by decidedly anti-SWAPO bureaucrats who formerly made up the backbone of the colonial administration. This virtually shuts out black Namibians from the middle and upper echelons of the bureaucracy.

To add to its woes, Walvis Bay, Namibia's only deep water port, did not revert to Namibia at independence. South Africa claimed the port, which handles 95% of Namibia's overseas trade, as part of its territory, in defiance of the UN and the Namibian people.

SWAPO, therefore, came to power in a country with an economy that was entirely structured to export wealth to the benefit of foreign interests, and utterly incapable of meeting the most basic needs of the majority of Namibians. SWAPO's task of restructuring was made all the more difficult because external support for such an undertaking was virtually non-existent.

SWAPO found itself walking a tight-rope between addressing the needs of the majority of Namibians, in a country renowned for one of the most extreme disparities between rich and poor, and preventing the real possibility of a post-

colonial flight of capital and skill. It also faced the threat of military or political destabilisation by South Africa in the event of the adoption of a radical economic programme, (with neighboring Angola and Mozambique providing horrific examples of South Africa's capacity and preparedness to do so).

Ultimately, SWAPO has opted for a conservative economic programme designed to assuage the fears of the white community in Namibia, and create an inviting environment for local and foreign investment. The fundamental restructuring of the economy to permit real redistribution of Namibian wealth, and the creation of jobs has, for now, disappeared from the government's agenda.

## The current situation

The contradictions in which SWAPO finds itself today remain the same. It continues to have broad, even growing, popular support on the one hand, while on the other it continues to be incapable of delivering on the promises made during the liberation struggle.

Regional and local elections last year saw SWAPO gain just over two thirds of the vote and trounce the DTA. The DTA, which was once a formidable foe and is now divided and weak. It has been unsuccessful in attracting significant support from the black population, while SWAPO has wooed many DTA supporters and leaders to its cause, especially as it has progressively moved to the political centre.

But SWAPO is paying a price for its new political orientation. NANSO, the national student organisation which played a crucial role in carrying the torch of the liberation struggle at a time when most SWAPO cadres were in exile, has disaffiliated itself from SWAPO. Trade unions appear to be moving in the same direction, and disillusion is setting in among ex-SWAPO combatants, many of whom remain landless and jobless.

This disenchantment has been aggravated by the growing wealth and elitist practices of many SWAPO government officials. For example, while residential racial segregation remains the rule in practice for most Namibians, cabinet ministers have moved out of Katutura, an historical base for political activism, and into the white suburbs of Windhoek.

The legacy of apartheid is perhaps most evident in the structure of the work force and patterns of land ownership. As with the civil service, many black Namibians are shut out of higher paying jobs in the private sector, with a white management and a black labour force remaining the norm. An extreme but telling example, is the South African copper mining giant, Tsumeb Corporation, which employs only 2 black foremen. Qualified black Namibians hold out little hope for moving into Tsumeb's management structures when middle-management whites have a penchant for decorating their cars with swastikas. On a more positive note, a new labour code came into effect one year ago which represents an important victory

continued on page 8



# War in Angola

"Violence has been the key note of Africa's experience of Portugal."

BY JACKIE KLOPP

What is the worst conflict in the world today? Bosnia? Somalia?

No.

In terms of sheer numbers of people dead and dying the answer is clearly the Angolan war. One recent (and conservative) UN (United Nations) estimate places the daily death toll at 1000 people. This figure is bound to rise.

Mines randomly planted and forgotten continue to kill and cripple in a country that already has the largest population of amputees in the world. Thousands, displaced and unable to plant crops, will face starvation. Angolan society is in utter upheaval.

Carl Simpson, a lonely reporter in Angola's capital, Luanda, wrote in August: "In terms of the stock indices of human misery, the Angolan conflict offers firm competition to other wars... There is a massive internal refugee problem. Hunger is a real threat in some areas. Medical supplies are in fierce demand. Lives are being lost, hundreds a day, but few reporters are there to see the killing."

His prognosis: "depressing almost beyond belief".

Since Simpson wrote, conditions have deteriorated and a large-scale famine is predicted for March of next year.

Despite the scale of horror in Angola and its potential to worsen, the media is largely silent. Those who do cover the war tend to blame UNITA (Union for the Total Independence of Angola) and its leader, Jonas Savimbi, for perpetuating hostilities.

After 17 years of civil war and hundreds of years of struggle against a brutalizing colonial regime, Angola held UN supervised elections in September last year. UNITA lost to its professed enemy, the MPLA (The People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola), winning 32% of parliamentary seats to MPLA's 53.85%.

Savimbi himself received 40% of the presidential vote compared to MPLA leader Jose Eduardo Dos Santos' 49.57%. UN special representative to Angola, Margaret Antsee, called the elections 'generally free and fair'.

Nevertheless, Savimbi declared that the elections were rigged. With stockpiles of American and South African arms, UNITA continued its push for power by other means. By some estimates, UNITA now controls over 75% of the country, including the diamond-producing region.

European reports suggest that UNITA has successfully smuggled more than \$100 million worth of diamonds out of the country, probably with the help of Zaire. This money is being used to finance its war machine.

In Luanda, the response has been an eruption of anger. UNITA supporters were the victims of a spasm of violence. The Angolan government, besides facing immense infrastructural problems,

famine and lack of funds after an expensive election, is literally fighting for its life as Savimbi makes no pretenses about how he deals with opposition.

To blame the crisis on Savimbi, however, would be too simplistic. As in all stories of human violence, the roots of this war reach deep into history and involve a complex of external actors. Angolans have been in continual struggle with and against external forces that disrupt, maim, distort and kill.

## Portuguese in Angola

When the Portuguese arrived on Angola's coasts in the late 15th century, they found a network of relatively peaceful and prosperous kingdoms. Over the next centuries, African political organization disintegrated, through Portuguese conquest and intrigue. Until the rise of liberation movements in the 1960s, Portuguese exploitation of African labour persisted.

From 1600 to 1850 the Portuguese penetrated into Angola's interior, feeding Africans into slavery as they went. Most slaves were sent to work in plantations in Brazil. Slavery was later replaced by 'contract labour', which in essence was forced labour, as Africans were not paid.

This prompted thousands of Angolans to flee. Many people went to South Africa where wages, while very low, were at least wages. Naturally, such a



system survives only through violence. Indeed, in the words of prominent historian Basil Davidson: "violence has been the key note of Africa's experience of Portugal."

Spontaneous uprisings and other forms of African resistance were brutally suppressed. Peaceful forms of protest such as strikes, political mobilization, and alternative media were squashed.

Indeed, Portugal itself did not constitute a democracy.

Until a coup in 1974, Portugal was under the Salazar dictatorship. Confronted with an inherently violent system, Africans turned to violence. By the 1960s, Portugal faced two major organized liberation movements; MPLA formed in 1961 and UNITA in,



MPLA supporters rally against UNITA

formed 1966.

After the coup, Portugal loosened its grips on Angola but refused to accept the idea of independence. This was during the heart of the Cold War, and the United States and Soviet Union stepped onto the scene more actively. Now Angola, traumatized by slavery and colonialism, was caught in the middle of super power politics.

The MPLA had a socialist platform and was viewed as an enemy by the United States. The Soviets, of course, along with the Cubans, gave the MPLA assistance. UNITA became the vehicle for American and South African influence.

Both the US, in its anti-Communist crusade, and the white supremacist South African regime viewed a revolutionary government in Angola as threatening to their interests. In the eyes of South Africa, an African government in Angola might give support to other liberation movements such as the ANC (African National Congress) and SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organisation) in South Africa and South West Africa (Namibia) respectively.

## Cubans in Angola

Thus it came to be that UNITA and Savimbi became partial creatures of American and South African foreign policy to destabilize any MPLA government. South Africans funneled weapons, advice, and personnel into UNITA.

In turn, the MPLA government appealed to Cuba who responded by sending a military mission. When South African-UNITA forces penetrated deep into Angola in 1987, it was Cuban-MPLA troops who pushed them back and in the process gained control of Northern Namibia and its water supplies.

This military victory had profound significance in the entire region. According to Professor Ed Dosman of York

University, the victory forced South Africa to reconsider its determination to hold onto Namibia. This triumph shook the confidence of the South African Defense Forces who suffered substantial casualties. With the Angolan victory, the myth of white South African invincibility died.

South African defeat, however, did not mean the end of UNITA and Savimbi. According to *Africa Report*, a senior South African diplomat and former commander of UNITA troops, made the following comment: "We and the Americans created Savimbi, but no one controls him." (The American government failed to recognize the Angolan government after elections and some argue this encouraged Savimbi to restart the war.)

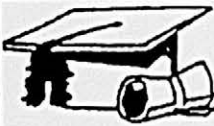
The Soviet Union has since collapsed and is no longer an actor in the region. The MPLA introduced economic and political reforms and has a democratic mandate. UNITA, Washington's "freedom fighters", now prove to be embarrassing for the United States who gesture weakly to Savimbi that he should stop fighting to negotiate "power-sharing".

The UN role throughout the conflict has been feeble. Approximately 800 UN personnel helped monitor elections but without a peace-keeping force to help disarm the country, it was easy for Savimbi to pick up arms and fight. Without firm action now, it will be easy for UNITA to perpetuate the conflict. The UN, however, has shown little interest.

As this drama unfolds, Angolans continue to suffer and die in a country strained to exhaustion by the incessant battering of violently hostile external forces. The United States, Portugal, the UN, and the rest of the outside world looks away from the Angolan crisis, perhaps consoling itself that it is an Angolan matter, an internal African affair.



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...continued from page 6



Namibians demonstrate against the Pretoria government's installation of a "Council of Ministers" in Windhoek.

for Namibian workers. For the first time, all workers, including domestic workers, farm labourers and public service employees are covered by labour legislation, including the (limited) right to strike, and control on working conditions.

Perhaps the most sought after fruit of independence was land redistribution. Despite some tentative steps by the government in that direction, land ownership still largely reflects its apartheid origins. The private ownership of 45% of the total land area and 74% of potentially arable land by 4 000 mainly white commercial farmers constitutes a veritable brake on any fundamental redistribution of wealth.

SWAPO's intentions to nationalize land were frustrated early on by the independence agreement which forbade the expropriation of land from white farmers, and the new constitution which enshrined the right to private property. For a country in which 80% of the population derives its livelihood from the countryside, the implications of such policies are profound. The redistribution of land which has occurred to date, has been largely limited to wealthier black farmers looking to increase their land holdings, leaving the concerns of squatters and dispossessed farm labourers unaddressed.

There is evidence that SWAPO is still committed to addressing the land question. The Land Reform Bill, currently being formulated, holds out some hope, with the possibility of expropriating the holdings of some 400 foreign absentee landlords. There has also been some action towards strengthening women's access to land, in some circumstances granting them the right

to own and bequeath the land they work. Affirmative action plans are also in the works to support women through training and to provide them with low interest loans.

The SWAPO government has been unable to challenge the foreign control of Namibia's considerable mineral wealth. In too many instances it has not had the power to put an end to the practice of what has been referred to as the political economy of theft of its non-renewable resources. Namibia's mineral sector is almost entirely controlled by large South African, British and American transnationals. Diamond mining, for example, is exclusively controlled by Consolidated Diamond Mining, a subsidiary wholly owned by De Beers of South Africa. Almost all of Namibia's mineral exports are channelled through South Africa for processing, then re-exported abroad, resulting in a net outflow of wealth from Namibia.

#### Namibia's Future

The end of South Africa's occupation of Namibia brought, simultaneously, the joys of political independence, and the sorrows of economic neo-colonialism. But two important developments now put new weapons in the hands of Namibians

in their struggle for full liberation. In August, Namibia negotiated the return of Walvis Bay and the 12 Penguin Islands (also withheld by South Africa at independence in an attempt to maintain control over Namibia's fishing industry) before next May. This is an important victory for Namibian political sovereignty and territorial integrity. It also represents an important economic gain as now Namibia, not South Africa, will collect the revenue from customs and excise duties, and will regain control over the fisheries processing industry which is based in Walvis Bay.

Further, SWAPO stands poised to finally win a two-thirds majority in general elections slated for next year. That victory may give SWAPO the political power to make decisions more in keeping with its original vision of true national liberation. It is also significant that in its first four years of independence, despite overwhelming constraints, Namibia has devoted significant resources to health and education, has been hailed as a model for its respect of individual human rights, is the home of a vibrant and critical independent press, and supports the autonomy of grassroots organisations.

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#### LAYOUT AND PHOTOGRAPHY MEETING

Tuesday, October 19  
at 5:30 in the Daily  
office. Be there



# No Prospects for Peace

BY CHRIS SHERIDAN

On April 14, 1993, I stood in the middle of West street in the South African city of Durban. Blaring police sirens filled the air above me. The street was deserted. In the distance, a wave of people, most of them Black South Africans, surged rhythmically towards me.

Four days after the brutal assassination of Communist party leader Chris Hani, the march of protest had begun.

The demonstration in Durban was one of many organized across the country by a coalition of trade unions, women's groups, religious groups, and schools. Now, the time had come and I waited to join the marchers. I didn't know then that that day would teach me that civil war has become inevitable in South Africa.

The vanguard, mostly young men wielding sticks and clubs, approached at a furious pace. A white man in a business suit scurried frantically ahead of the marchers. As I stepped

onto a sidestreet to wait for the first group to pass, he ducked behind me with a sigh of relief and fled.

The banner-clad crowd surged by like a massive battering ram. In their anger, some marchers kicked over garbage bins and smashed shop windows.

The stirring songs of protest eclipsed all other noise. Men, women and children thrust their fists high in the air, toying (a South African style of protest march) in a fiery show of human force. With well over 50 000 people, this was easily the largest and most powerful protest I had ever seen.

Joining the crowd, I made my way up the street. White people peered, in awe, out of office windows or stood behind protected glass, forced to watch as the tide of political change rolled in with a vengeance.

The crowd stopped suddenly. As the marchers continued their chanting and singing, I moved closer to the front of the lengthy mob. A line of well-armed and intimidating police and military, known collectively as the South African Defence Force (SADF), faced the singing crowd.

Even though this march was legal, the vandalism caused the SADF to stop the demonstration. Every officer gripped a weapon as the demonstrators hurled anti-apartheid slogans at them with increasing intensity.

## On the brink of war

Without warning, the muffled boom of a gun rang out, accompanied by a second, and then a third. The police were pelting the crowd with bullets. My mind filled with a blinding sense of frenzy.

I heard screams and saw people running in all directions. Faced with the prospect of being hit by a stray bullet, I crouched and followed the marchers away from the smoking guns of the SADF. My head buzzed with numbness as I tried to maintain my balance.

This was unbelievable. High-pitched screams filled the street as I heard another round of shots. The screaming went on without pause. A young child stood with a frightened and confused look on his face. I grabbed his arm and hoisted him to the edge of the crowd.

Anyone who wonders about the future of South Africa, should have been a demonstrator in Durban that day. While no one was seriously injured, the SADF's trigger-happy approach to the demonstration showed me that peaceful transition is next to impossible.

"Welcome to South Africa", my friend Sipho Maseko said with a laugh when I told him of the Durban march.

I was visiting Maseko, a friend from university, in Capetown. He is the chairperson of the Western Cape branch of AZAPO (Azanian People's Organization), a Marxist-oriented Black organization. An uncompromising and blunt man with a soft voice, he told me peace is not in the government's or the SADF's best interest.

For this reason and others, Maseko said, more and more Black South Africans are joining the Pan African Congress (PAC). Famous for persistently chanting the slogan, 'One settler. One bullet.', the PAC is a more militant organization than the African National Congress (ANC). His predictions were bleak for the future of the country.

On the Eastern side of South Africa, the sentiment was the same. I visited the Transkei, a stronghold of PAC support and activism. Somadoda, another university friend, showed me the place where he and other local activists were tortured during the state of emergency in the 1980s. In all the years I'd known him, Somadoda had been jolly and easy-going, never uttering a violent word. Now he looked at me coldly and said he would be purchasing a gun soon.

After witnessing the demonstration in Durban, his revelation didn't shock me. Many law-abiding homelands inhabitants told me of their secret arms caches. If the time comes when war breaks out, they want to be able to defend themselves.

For most Black South Africans, defence is vi-



Students flee riot police after demonstration

tal. Particularly as the political right, closely aligned with many members of the SADF, becomes increasingly intolerant.

This past June, members of the fascist 'Volksfront' which included members of the Afrikaaner Resistance Movement (AWB) and the South African Conservative Party, stormed the World Trade Centre in Johannesburg. This act of internal terrorism was a desperate attempt by members of the front to derail the peaceful negotiations taking place inside.

After the attack, Nelson Mandela told the press that he would engage 'Umkhonto we Sizwe' ('Spear of the Nation'), a group which uses violence to fight Apartheid, if the right continued in such a manner. A clear indication that both sides are preparing for war.

After the smoke subsided in the streets of Durban, I walked back to the youth hostel. As the late afternoon sun descended towards the South African horizon, I could still hear the distant songs of protest. Most of the demonstrators returned to the townships followed closely by the SADF.

As their spirited songs lifted with the warm air, many white South Africans resumed their evening activities. People walked to local restaurants, others returned home from a long day at work, while some just strolled the streets enjoying the early evening air.

For them, the march was barely audible, and the march a thing of the past, but for me the stirring sounds still echoed loudly. Six months later, the Durban march remains sharply etched in my memory.

## EVENTS

**LAGEM** (Lesbian and Gay Employees of McGill) meet today at Thomson House, 17h30. Welcome to all. Call 398-4711.

**QPIRG** Publicity Committee meet today at 18h in the Eaton building, rms 307-308.

**Rhinoceros Cabaret** presents "Liberty and Democracy: A Century of Revolution" at Café Campus (57 Prince Arthur), 21h.

**Corrupt Tories**—a talk with election candidates (what they never told you about corruption in Ottawa!), today in Leacock 232, 19h.

**Women with eating disorders**—support group held by the Sexual Assault Centre of McGill, today at 19h. Call 398-2700.

**Anthropology Speaker Series** "Indigenous methods of fertility regulation in rural In-

dia" — by Dr. Tulsi Patel. Today 12h30-14h, Leacock 738.

Place your money on the **EUS Loonie Line** to raise money for Centraide. Wednesday Oct. 20th from 8h to 17h.

The **SSMU Polish Students' Association** is looking for members. All interested call Sebastian at 426-2355 or Ted at 365-9901.

**SINCE 1911**  
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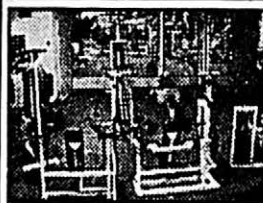
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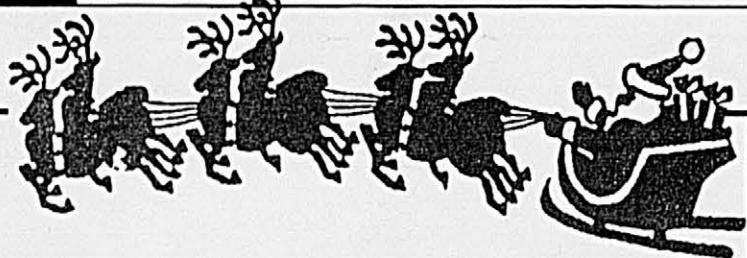
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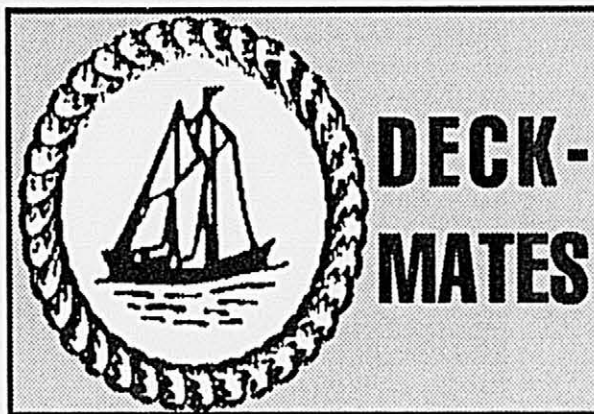


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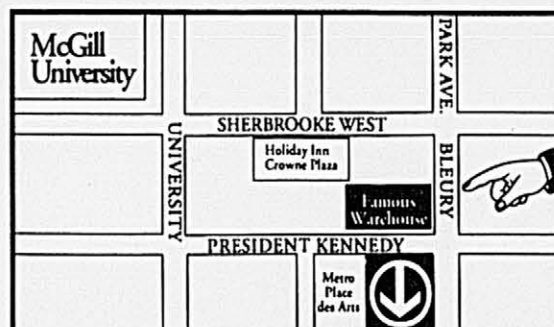
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